



Welcome to this edition of the Summerhill News

Here you can read about Mrs Lins, A. S. Neill's first wife, the centenary celebration of the suffragists organised by the Summerhill External Affairs Committee, the appointment of Mark Griffiths to the Summerhill Trust and finally, Arvind Gupta – science toy maker.

Happy reading, *Steve Fawdry* (Editor)

Mrs Lins

....Neill's "First Lady"

by Branwen Williams, a pupil 1931-1942



Ada Lillian Sydney Lindesay was born 28th April 1871 in Northern Australia, the younger of two sisters. Following the death of their doctor father and after considerable financial struggle, their mother moved to Germany where the two girls grew up.

Ada Lindesay (or Mrs Lins as she later became known to us at Summerhill) married Otto Neustatter and they settled in Munich. Following the birth of their son Walter, Mrs Lins spent increasing periods of time with her older sister who had moved to England by then. It was agreed that Walter should attend King Alfred's School in North London and live with his aunt. Neill starting teaching

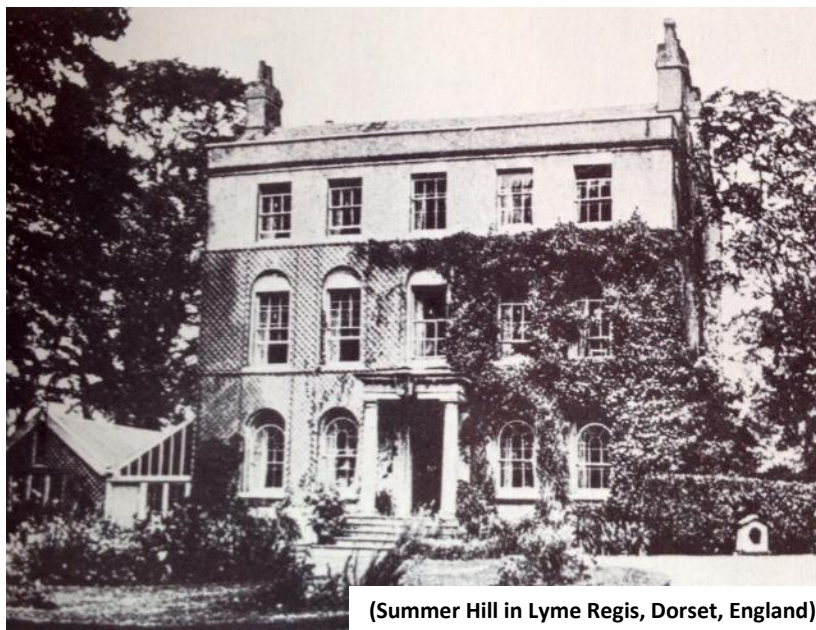
at King Alfred's soon after leaving the army in 1918 and it was this that brought Neill and Mrs Lins into contact with each other for the first time.

Mrs Lins was a modern woman with many interests. She was involved with the women's suffrage movement and was a talented musician. She also moved in a circle of intellectuals whilst in

Germany. She was greatly interested in Neill's ideas about education and became a keen and supportive partner in developing plans for opening an International School together.

Back in Germany, Mrs Lins's position as Matron at Delcroze Eurythmics School in Hellerau, Dresden was to provide a starting point for Neill's plans. Unable to find suitable premises in England, Neill joined her in Germany to open a small school in a part of the Delcroze buildings.

Mrs Lins was an invaluable business partner providing for Neill the practical and organisational skills for running the school. They shared the day to day welfare of the children but she was also very good at dealing with the financial matters which were not one of Neill's strengths. Larger premises were later found at Sonntagsberg near Vienna, Austria where the staff and children formed an international community, perhaps the true beginnings of Summerhill as it is today.



(Summer Hill in Lyme Regis, Dorset, England)

In 1924 the school moved to Lyme Regis in Dorset, England and occupied an imposing house called Summer Hill. Three years later it moved again, this time to Leiston in Suffolk taking the name 'Summerhill' with it. Meanwhile Mrs Lins and her husband were divorced, but he later remarried and the two couples remained firm friends for the rest of their lives.

Neill always emphasised the crucial role Mrs Lins played in the formation and running of Summerhill. She has been described by many as warm, gregarious, cultured, unflappable, immensely patient and kind. As a teacher she made her lessons interesting and as a mother to both staff and children she was completely dependable. She dealt with the many problems encountered with tact and sureness.

It may be that Neill found her pursuit of cleanliness and tidiness rather irritating, but I believe she commanded some appreciation from the children, as a sense of order can provide a measure of security for some. Her relentless supervision of a healthy diet ensured varied, excellent and much enjoyed meals. If a child was ill, the provision of Ryvita and Marmite with orange juice soon sorted the sick from the skivers. When Neill sometimes dodged the delicate subject of the sexual interests of the older pupils, Mrs Lins faced them head on. She also took on the valuable role of hosting some of the less welcome visitors the school attracted, entertaining them with charm, a role she much enjoyed.

But some things were definitely off limits to other members of the Summerhill community. She took great pride in her garden and greenhouse and in these areas was regarded as a bit of a tartar!

She did tend to have her favourites among the children too (something Neill was incapable of doing) and would provide additional succour for them. As a receiver of hot onion soup in the middle of the night when suffering from heavy colds, I certainly can't complain. Interestingly, in Neill's absence Mrs Lins took over capably, but when he was present I believe she felt rather dominated by him.

Her rare attendance at General Meetings was noted by us pupils. Although it had the full support of Mrs Lins, this self-governance basis for the school was more Neill's domain. She had enormous respect for Neill and together they made a sound team.

The school's wartime evacuation to North Wales in 1940 was the beginning of Mrs Lins's decline. They both found it very difficult and her frail health followed by a stroke culminated in her death in April 1944.



(Summerhill School as it is today in Leiston, Suffolk)

I saw her shortly before her death. In her early seventies, it was deeply shocking to find this remarkable woman helpless and without hope, changed beyond all recognition.

She was deeply loved by many and sadly missed by Neill, whose tender obituary summed up her exceptional qualities.

The Suffragists come to town

By Michael Newman (house parent and teacher at Summerhill) + Ed

Last year, six local primary schools were hosted by Summerhill to celebrate the centenary of a tea in our grounds. The tea was originally hosted by Evelyn Garrett who owned the house (then known as Newhaven) prior to Summerhill taking up residence there in 1927.

Also present at the original tea to celebrate the suffragists march were Millicent Garrett Fawcett and her sister Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (the first woman to qualify as a doctor in Britain) both of whom were among the leading women's rights campaigners of the day.



(The centenary celebration at Summerhill)



(The original tea in 1913. Evelyn, Millicent and Elizabeth are seated to the right of the tea urn)

All 3 Garrett women were members of a wealthy manufacturing family (the Garretts) who became famous for the production of portable steam engines. They used an early assembly line located in a new workshop known as 'The Long Shop' due to its length. Part of the old works is still preserved as The Long Shop Museum in Leiston.



The afternoon event at Summerhill celebrated the Suffragists with a parade of banners, a Fairtrade Tea made by Gill (the school cook) and the Summerhill Fair Trade Committee, a re-enactment of the 100 year old picture (as seen above) and a meeting in the Lounge teaching the children about our meetings and the relevance of Summerhill to rights. Chair and secretary were Johanna and Georgia. Speeches were given by Ron Bailey as local councillor on the Town's Fairtrade committee, Zoe Readhead (school principal) and Margaret Young (grand-daughter of the hostess of the original event). Volunteers from the Long Shop Museum played the parts of Millicent and Elizabeth.

(Picture left: Michael Newman, External Affairs Committee)

All the schools were sent a power point presentation of the event with pictures of their children, so that they could share it with other pupils. It was jointly organised by Summerhill and the Long Shop Museum, and was covered by local papers, including a 3 page spread.

As a result, the Chair of Saxmundham Town Council, John Fisher, asked us to help him organise a centenary event in Saxmundham. Posters were put up in the shops in Saxmundham a week before that explained the history behind the event. A special booklet and exhibition was created.

Then, on 15th July three schools, Saxmundham Primary and Free Schools and Summerhill joined with the Long Shop Museum (who supported it with volunteers, costumes and role plays) to parade through Market Place in Saxmundham where a hundred years earlier the Suffragists marched and held a meeting.



The children, teachers and guests listened to speeches, including extracts from the original presentations, by 'Millicent Garrett Fawcett', President of the NUWSS (National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies), a local woman, and Katherine Vulliamy. Another guest was Reverend Pam Smith of the Saxmundham United Reform Church whose minister in 1913 presided over the event. Everyone sang Suffragist songs as they walked.

An exhibition at the Market Hall included the international aspect of the Suffragists, including a picture of Indian women in the early 1900s supporting the English struggle for women's suffrage. The event was hosted by Saxmundham Library Friends, was opened by John Fisher Chair of the Town Council, and co-organised by Summerhill whose students generously provided cake refreshments for the day.

(This article also includes information from: [Witness.guardian.com](https://www.witness.guardian.com) & [East Anglian Daily Times](https://www.eastanglian.co.uk))

New kid on the block!

Mark Griffiths joins the Summerhill Trust



In November last year we appointed a new Trustee, Mark Griffiths. Mark's association with Summerhill started in 1993 with a two-year stint as Class 2 teacher. More recently his son Tom joined the school as a House kid.

In the intervening years Mark trained as an Educational Psychotherapist and has worked in primary, secondary, mainstream and SEBD (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties) settings. He ran a multi-agency support team in a London borough for 5 years.

In 2010 Mark started a social enterprise, The School and Family Works, which supports families with children with complex needs through therapeutic services offered in schools and community settings. Much of his family work has been grant funded by well-known regional and national bodies.

Mark said, "I am pleased to have this opportunity to support the work of the Trust, drawing on my experience in schools, my knowledge of services and my therapeutic training. Specifically, I hope to bring external funding to the Trust through engaging grant-making organisations with Summerhill."

The Summerhill Trust

By Steve Fawdry, Trustee & Newsletter Editor

The A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust is a registered charity whose purpose is to promote the educational philosophy, ideas, life and writings of A. S. Neill, and to provide bursaries or other forms of financial assistance to school pupils.

We currently have a policy of making bursaries to existing pupils only. For information on how to apply for a bursary, parents can contact the school office 01728 830540.

During 2013 we received £5,792 in donations, including a £2,000 legacy from a gentleman unknown to us. This enabled us to award five bursaries to existing Summerhill pupils whose parents are struggling financially.

To all those who so generously continue to support the spirit of Summerhill – thank you, we couldn't do it without you!



Thank You!

But the fact is, you too can make a difference to a child's life by making a donation to the Trust. Whether it is a one off or regular donation, we will spend it wisely.

Just £5 will buy some materials for a child to make things in woodwork.

£10 will enable a child to go to the cinema and have some popcorn too!

£25 means a child can join their friends on a school trip.

£50 will pay for two extra-curricular lessons.



£100 will pay for travel costs incurred by the External Affairs Committee during their promotion of Summerhill & the ideas/philosophies of A. S. Neill.

£1,000 will provide assistance over two terms for parents who are struggling to pay their child's school fees.

A regular donation made by standing order will become an important part of our 'bread and butter'. To set this up please contact the school office on 01728 830540.

Lydia Corbett

By Hussein Lucas and the editor



"The cosmos flowers, one with the universe", one of 27 pictures
Lydia will be exhibiting at the Francis Kyle Gallery



Lydia Corbett in her studio

Following the last newsletter's feature on ex-Summerhillian Lydia Corbett, we are pleased to let you know that from 5th March – 3rd April, Lydia will be holding an exhibition, "World in a Flower", at the Francis Kyle gallery, 9 Maddox Street, London W1S 2QE.

You can see more of Lydia's work on her [website](#).

Obituary - Donald Case

By Zoe Readhead (Summerhill Principal)

This last summer my dear friend Donald Case passed away. It was a short illness - a particularly aggressive cancer. So short that I couldn't believe he had gone so soon. (Picture below: Zoe Readhead, below right: Donald Case)



Donald was at Summerhill with his older brother, Peter. Their parents were friends and great supporters of Neill's.

He was older than us at school. A Carriage kid when we were still San kids, around 9 or 10. We six girls in my group were all madly in love with him.

We followed him around and pressed gifts upon him from our weekly food parcels from home.

He was obviously very embarrassed by it, but was gallant and terribly kind. He was the archetypal Summerhillian. He built huts in the woods, made

creative penny slot machines to raise money for end of term parties, was always busy, dirty, playing. He was fair, reasonable, level headed and full of common sense. He built a wonderful tin hut on the edge of the Hockey field with his mates. It was like a small house with a wooden framework. It was always known as 'Donald's hut' and lasted for years after he had left.

When Donald left Summerhill he joined the Forestry Commission and worked up to a senior position there. I lost touch with him until he came to my Mum's funeral in 1997 when we rekindled our old friendship. Over the last few years I have considered Donald to be one of my special friends. He visited us from time to time and we talked on the phone regularly. He was very fond of our family, asking after everybody individually and enjoying looking round the farm with great interest.

For those who have never heard Donald, his main, marvelous skill was on the piano. He was a master of Boogie Woogie, writing his own music which was a mixture of hot jazz and real cool stuff. He had a lovely voice too. He started to learn at Summerhill, showing his talent early. He taught us all to play a running base (which few of us mastered).



He continued his passion for playing but was always very shy about performing in public, though he had a wonderful time with my son Henry in the recording studio at Summerhill. Together with some other musicians they played and laughed as often as they could. In my last conversation with Donald he said they had been among his happiest times. Luckily Henry recorded much of it.

Donald came and played at my sixtieth birthday party and a few reunions. He always looked happiest playing with his friends, old and new.

When he heard that I had taken up classical singing he wrote me a song for us to sing together. Sadly we only managed a few rehearsals together but it was a huge honor and I treasure it!

It was lovely to have Donald as part of my life again. I am so sorry that he has gone. He was the kind of man the world needs - full of humor and warmth, with a smile to knock you for six at 20 paces!

The world is a poorer place for his passing.

Toys from Trash

Arvind Gupta - Science toy maker

Following the mail-out of the last Summerhill News, Arvind Gupta, science toy maker got in touch. Arvind is passionate about books and toys so I asked him to write a short piece about himself and his highly acclaimed work. Here's what he said... (Ed')



"I graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India (1975) with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Following this I worked for a few years in a truck plant before giving it up to devote my life to science popularization.
(Left, Arvind Gupta)

Since then I have written 22 books on science activities, translated 150 books in to Hindi and presented 140 films on science activities for the National Television. My first book

Matchstick Models & Other Science Experiments was translated into 12 Indian languages and sold over half a million copies.

Everyday 50,000 children across the world view our films in 18 languages. Also 15,000 passionate books on Education, Peace, Science, Environment and Maths are downloaded every day!

I have received several honours, including the inaugural *National Award for Science Popularization among Children* (1988), *Distinguished Alumnus Award of IIT, Kanpur* (2000); *Indira Gandhi Award for Science Popularization* (2008) and the *Third World Academy of Science Award* (2010) for making science interesting for children.

I was instrumental in getting many significant books on Education translated in several Indian languages. These include *Summerhill* – A.S. Neill, *Instead of Education*, *Escape from Childhood*, *Freedom and Beyond* and *Instead of Education* by John Holt, *Tottochan* by Tetsuko Kuroyangi, *Teacher* by Sylvia Aston Warner, *Danger School* by Paulo Friere's group IDAC, *Free at Last* by Daniel Greenberg and *Divaswapna* by Gijubhai Badheka. The British Charity VSO (Voluntary Services Overseas) gave me permission to translate the *VSO Science Teachers Handbook* and the *VSO Maths Teachers Handbook* into Hindi and Marathi.

It is my firm belief that the digital dream is to make all the good books in the world, in all languages, freely accessible to the poorest children and teachers of the world. My TED talk titled "[Toys from Trash](#)" has been watched by many.

I currently work at the Children's Science Centre of IUCAA (Inter-University Centre of Astronomy & Astrophysics, Pune, India) and share my passion for books and toys through my [website](#).



(Arvind holding one of his fantastic toys made from trash)

For 30-years I dreamt of getting A. S. Neill's book *Summerhill* translated and with Zoe Readhead's kind help we were able to achieve this in two major languages - Hindi and Marathi. The book got rave reviews in the vernacular press. Someday we wish to translate *Neill, Neill, Orange Peel* also into Hindi.

Summerhill school has stood as a beacon for over nine decades for all libertarians who value the freedom of children. May more such schools spring forth and blossom."



Visit the **NEW** Summerhill School website [here](#)

TED

"Ideas worth Spreading"

Links to Video talks on education

[Sir Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity](#)

[Sugata Mitra: The child-driven education](#)

[Our digital lives, Eli Pariser: Beware online "filter bubbles"](#)

[Nick Thorpe, Author of 'Urban Worrier' mentions how a visit to Summerhill inspired him](#)

[Arvind Gupta, Science toy maker "Toys from Trash"](#)

Suggest some more to.... summerhillnewsletter@gmail.com



A.S. Neill talks about freedom and his Summerhill School in England. Summerhill is often said to be the first school based on freedom and democratic ideals. The documentary was called "[Here and Now](#)".

More interesting videos

[Imagine a school..... Summerhill](#)

[Make Your Voice Heard: Discover Democratic Education](#)

[Think Global School](#)

Suggest some more to.... summerhillnewsletter@gmail.com



Links to pages related to education

[Summerhill School](#)

[After Summerhill](#)

[EUDEC](#)

[Alternative education resource organization \(AERO\)](#)

Suggest some more... summerhillnewsletter@gmail.com



All the Summerhill Newsletters can be viewed at Dropbox [here](#)



SUMMERHILL

A four part double BAFTA award winning children's drama about life at Summerhill, culminating in the battle and court case with OFSTED in 1999 [here](#).

Organisations & Resources

Links to organisations and resources

[Personalised Education Now](#)

Personalised Education Now promotes education based on learner-managed learning within a framework of democratic values and practices. An educator becomes, pre-dominantly, 'the guide on the side' rather than 'the sage on the stage'.

[EUDEC](#)

EUDEC is a non-profit organisation that promotes democratic education as a sensible educational model for all democratic states. Its [members](#) are individuals, [schools](#) and institutions throughout Europe with decades of experience in democratic education.

[Arvind Gupta Toys](#)

Arvind Gupta is a science toy maker - he shares his passion for toys and books through his [website](#). Everyday 50,000 children across the world view his films in 18 languages. Also 15,000 passionate books on Education, Peace, Science, Environment and Maths are downloaded every day.

If you have something interesting you'd like to share with Summerhill readers that is related to Summerhill school, please do get in touch with me to talk it through. Steve Fawdry, Editor.

The next Summerhill News will be mailed out at the end of July 2014

Copy deadline is 15 June 2014.

Newsletter Editor

Steve Fawdry

summerhillnewsletter@gmail.com

Summerhill School

Zoe Readhead (Principal)

Tel & Fax 00 (44) 1728 830540

office@summerhillschool.co.uk

www.summerhillschool.co.uk